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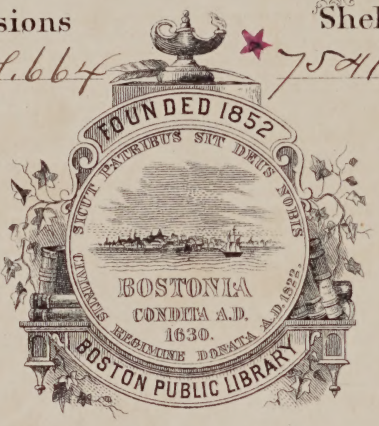

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REMARKS

ON THE

DOINGS AND RESULT

OF AN

ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL,

Holden in BRIMFIELD,

From *March* 12, to *March* 18, 1801, as continued by Adjournments;

WHOSE DOINGS AND RESULT

Have ſince been publiſhed by the Conſent of ſaid Council.

To which is added,

The Rev. Mr. BROWN's Requeſt,

For a Diſmiſſion from his Church and People.

ALSO,

A Statement of Facts,

In a LETTER, to a MEMBER of the COUNCIL.

PRINTED AT BOSTON,

BY *RUSSELL AND CUTLER*, CONGRESS-STREET.

1801.

B.H.
427.664
Mar. 15, 1889

REMARKS, &c.

TO the members of the Eccleſiaſtical Council; to thoſe in every place, who advocate or ſanction the cauſe of contention, began and carried on by the oppoſition in *Brimfield*, and their coadjutors of the Clergy and others; and to all the friends of truth and juſtice, the Subſcriber begs leave to addreſs himſelf:—

Gentlemen and Friends,

CONSIDERING myſelf in a land of civil and religious liberty, where people are allowed to ſpeak the truth, however grating to the ears of ſome, I am urged by the principles of ſelf-defence, to call in queſtion the propriety and equity of thoſe criminations and ratifications, contained in the reſult of Council of March 18th, 1801.

Before I proceed upon the propoſed remarks, I muſt inform my readers, that I do not conſider the Council to have been *mutual:* and that for the reaſons aſſigned in my requeſt for a diſmiſſion. Theſe reaſons I ſuggeſted to individuals of the Council, but were not conſidered by them in the light in which I viewed them. They choſe to proceed in the buſineſs, notwithſtanding the committee of the aggrieved refuſed to fulfil their engagements. Contrary to good policy, I conſented that the Council might proceed to buſineſs, though I did not then obligate myſelf to comply with the reſult.

Reſpecting the propriety of making the town a party with me in the Council, when the Selectmen and others poſitively declared they were not, I requeſt the Council and all others to whom this Addreſs ſhall come, to carefully peruſe the ſtatement in a letter ſubjoined to this Addreſs, and to the following vote of the town relative to the ſubject.

Voted—"That this town did not authorize the late Council here, to make them a party with the Rev. CLARK BROWN, in his controverſy with the aggrieved, either by themſelves, their committees, agents, or ſelectmen; and that ſaid Council had no right by the laws of the land to make themſelves guardians to the town of Brimfield; and that their attempting to do it, was for want of information, or a deſire to extend their prerogative beyond its due limits." *April 6*, 1801.

THE CRIMINATIONS.

ART. 1. *Reſpects Hereſy in Sentiment.*

In this I am criminated, not as a heretick, but for preaching what I really believed to be true: that is, in effect, for not being a hypocrite

and deceiver. They cenſure me for introducing and propagating a doctrine in oppoſition to that upon which this Church was originally founded, and which "is generally admitted as fundamental in theſe Churches:" that is to ſay, that I am criminal for not preaching the ſame or ſimilar ſentiments, which my predeceſſors preached, in oppoſition to my own real ſentiments, in order to pleaſe the neighbouring Miniſters and Churches only; for in fact I did pleaſe the aggrieved, when I firſt introduced them, becauſe afterwards I had a unanimous call from this people, to ſettle with them in the goſpel miniſtry, as may be proved from the town records. If I am cenſurable, according to this article of charge, then certainly LUTHER and CALVIN, were criminal in preaching doctrines in oppoſition to the Church of Rome, and which were generally admitted as fundamental in all parts of Chriſtendom: and likewiſe our forefathers and others, who have ſeperated from the Church of England, and embraced and propagated ſentiments which are generally admitted as fundamental in every part of the Britiſh dominions.

If a Miniſter really believes a people to be in an error, reſpecting the character of the Saviour, or reſpecting any part of chriſtian theology, he muſt not, according to the reſult of Council, endeavour to undeceive them, but muſt join to ſupport the error; in doing which, he muſt, when he appears before his people as a meſſenger of the revealed will of Jehovah, be careful to act the hypocrite, and not to let his real ſentiments be known; diſregarding truth while ſpeaking to his people, in the name of God and Chriſt. Indeed he muſt be very careful not to declare what he conceives to be the whole revealed will of God, according to his ordination vows. In a word, he muſt fear man more than God. I would here take the liberty to aſk thoſe gentlemen of the Council, who are of the ſentiments for the propagation of which they have criminated me, whether they act from ſuch motives and views, as thoſe which I have mentioned? If you do not, your vote on this article cannot be juſtified; and if you do, you will permit me to ſay, that your conduct is more inconſiſtent with the miniſterial character, than mine has been, according to your reſult, even admitting the accuſations and evidences of the oppoſition to be true. Since the reſult of your Council, I have been in converſation with one of the members of the firſt Council, a Hopkinſian, who voted againſt my inſtallment on account of my ſentiments. In the courſe of which, he obſerved, that I was juſtifiable in preaching my real ſentiments on the doctrines of chriſtianity; and alſo, that the miniſter who did not let his people know his real ſentiments, without any equivocations, or regard to any human arts of prudence and policy, in order to pleaſe the multitude, was one of the moſt wicked characters, in the ſight of Him, "who ſeeth not as man ſeeth, and judgeth not as man judgeth." But the Council reſults, that I am cenſurable for "the immoderate zeal and forwardneſs," with which I have endeavoured to introduce my ſentiments: that is, I am guilty of imprudence for being too zealous in a cauſe, which I really believed, and do now believe, to be the cauſe of reaſon, truth and revelation.

I diſmiſs this article, after requeſting the venerable Council, and others of my readers, to peruſe the ſtatement, ſubjoined to this, on the reſult upon this article of charge.*

ART. 2. *Defamatory Diſpoſitions.*

This article is ſanctioned and ratified by the Council, as every other article is. In this, I am charged with ſlander and defamation. The Council ſay in their reſult, that I have "repeatedly indulged myſelf in ungenerous, and defamatory reproaches of the Council, conſiſting of the neighbouring miniſters firſt invited to inſtall me, and of the party in oppoſition to me." They think that I have "had no ſufficient reaſon for the cenſures I have ſo liberally uttered, inaſmuch as Chriſtian candor ought to have taught me, that there was at leaſt a probable reaſon to conclude that they might be juſtifiable in their effects."

In remarking upon this article, I have utterly denied that I have ever ſlandered or defamed, either the clergy, or the oppoſition in this town. Slander and defamation, conſiſts in uttering and propagating falſe reports. That this is a true definition of the terms, the Council themſelves will not preſume to deny. This being admitted, the propagation of true accuſations, however diſagreeable, cannot with propriety be called *ſlander or defamation.*

That I have ſaid things about the neighbouring clergy, which perhaps had better not have been ſaid, I do not deny, though what I have ſaid about them is true. I have ſaid, that I have not had any great opinion of their literary knowledge; that I did not eſteem them for their catholiciſm; that I did not conſider them men of that ſobriety, which they profeſſed to have by their oppoſition to me; that I conſidered ſeveral of them to be as ſuſceptible of injuries, and as eaſily irritated as myſelf; that two of them had been at variance for more than a year, previous to their being invited to my inſtallment, having neither exchanged, nor even ſpoken to one another, and that this variance was cauſed by a contention over a glaſs of ſpirituous liquor; that one of them had pulled off his coat, according to reports, to box it with a pariſhioner; that another is given to imtemperance, and chargeable with a conduct in the pulpit which has excited levity; that characters of ſuch a deſcription, would not be acceptably received into the pulpit in Boſton, or other populous places; that ſome of them worked on their farms with leather aprons, when they had better been in their ſtudies; that they commenced their oppoſition to me, before they had any perſonal acquaintance with me; that they came from home with a view to oppoſe my inſtallment, and that their proceedings and reſults were uncharitable and cenſurable. Thus much I have ſaid, and thus much, I am confident, can be proved to the ſatisfaction of every unprejudiced mind.

Reſpecting what I have ſaid of the party in oppoſition to me, I cannot conſider myſelf chargeable with ſlander or defamation. I have ſaid, that I conſidered ſome of them as intemperate perſons, and not ſerious in their pretended zeal for the orthodoxy of this meridian; that

* I have the reſult of three Councils upon this article, none of them agree.—Which is right?

ſome, and indeed moſt of them, have raiſed and circulated falſe reports about me;* that, in my opinion, they violated truth and juſtice, in their oppoſition againſt the proceedings of this town; that ſome of them had taken property unlawfully, which I conſidered as a ſpecies of theft; and that, in my opinion, judging from facts, they could prove any thing they pleaſed.

Although the Council ſay, in their reſult, that I have "had no ſufficient reaſons for ſuch cenſures," as they term them, I muſt beg leave to differ from them in opinion, I do not think that there is even a "probable reaſon," by which ſuch a mode of conduct can be juſtifiable. The members of the Council have a right to judge for themſelves; I have an equal right.

ART. 3. PART 1ſt. *Relates to what I have ſaid,*

That if I am diſmiſſed from my people, I ſhould oppoſe the ſettlement of a miniſter, who ſhould preach doctrines in oppoſition to thoſe which I had preached. The Council cenſure me for making this declaration. But I ſtill think, I ſhould be juſtifiable in ſo doing: I would aſk the gentlemen, whether a zeal in the cauſe of truth, exerciſed in a regular and lawful way, can conſiſtently be ſaid "to militate with the pacific ſpirit of the Goſpel," or to interrupt the benign influence of genuine religion? If it does, then the conduct of the neighbouring clergy, and that of the oppoſition, and their ex-parte Councils, not excepting your own, is unjuſtifiable and cenſurable. But according to your reſult, if I ſhould leave preaching, and ſhould continue in this town, I ought not to have any choice in the re-ſettlement of a miniſter or oppoſe one whom I ſhould ſuppoſe would preach error; for in doing thus, I ſhould act contrary to the ſpirit of the Goſpel. The oppoſition, however, and the neighbouring clergy, in oppoſing me, and ſtigmatizing the conduct, character, proceedings and reſult of the inſtalling Council, by propagating unfounded and defamatory reports, have, according to your reſult, conducted according to "the ſpirit of the Goſpel;" and never, in one inſtance, "interrupted," by all their ungentleman and unchriſtian conduct, "the benign influence of genuine religion." I cannot but take the liberty to diſſent from your judgment.

PART 2d. *Relates to my refuſing to hear the prayers of the Council, who reſulted "againſt my inſtallment, and afterwards ſolemnly denying the fact."*

The reſult of the Council upon this part of the ſecond article, amounts to this, that in refuſing to tarry to hear the prayers of ſaid Council, after they reſulted they would not inſtall me, "was a criminally irreverent treatment of the appointed duty of prayer." I would here beg leave to aſk the Council, whether they can prove, either from reaſon or revelation, that praying amidſt a ſcene of confuſion, and in the preſence of a people, whoſe judgment the Council had inſulted, and who were almoſt univerſally expreſſing their great diſapprobation for the ſame, is or can be an appointed duty? And alſo, whether they can reaſonably ſuppoſe, that I ought at that time, when I was fully convinced, as I had reaſon to ſuſpect through the day, that the Council

* Moſt of theſe reports, the neighbouring Clergy received and propagated, if fame be true, with avidity.

were diſpoſed to treat me in an ungenerous, not to ſay an inſulting manner, to have tarried to hear their prayers, where there was no ardor, and in my opinion, little or no ſolemnity? If they ſhould anſwer theſe queſtions in the affirmative, they will again allow me the liberty to diſſent from them in opinion.

The reſult upon this part of the 3d article, which ſays, 'That the ſubſequent denial of having made the declaration, that *I did not want to hear their prayers*, has ſubjected me to the imputation of falſehood, was founded principally upon the oaths and teſtimonies of ſome of the firſt Council; notwithſtanding it was proved, as much as any negative evidence can prove, and ſufficient in my opinion, to convince the minds, of thoſe who were not determined to ratify and ſanction all the accuſations, with which a defendant was chargeable, that the evidences of thoſe miniſters, ought not to be conſidered as poſitive proofs of the fact, on account of the probability of their being miſtaken; in conſequence of their being upwards of twenty feet diſtance from me, and ſeparated by a crowd of people conſtantly paſſing and repaſſing, and alſo on account of its being juſt in the edge of the evening, and being dark in that part of the chamber where I was, and likewiſe on account of two other perſons having owned that they made the declaration with which the oppoſition and their evidences accuſe me, and eſpecially on account of the Rev. Mr. BALDWIN's aſking the Rev. Mr. WOODRUFF, who it was that made the declaration; who received for reply, that he believed it was Mr. BROWN; and who notwithſtanding this uncertainty, has ſolemnly teſtified that it was I who made the declaration, becauſe he ſaw *my lips move*.

Under theſe circumſtances, I will ſubmit the matter to the public opinion, whether I am juſtly "ſubjected to the imputation of falſehood," becauſe I denied having any remembrance of uttering ſuch an expreſſion.

The Council will accept of my grateful acknowledgement for their "charitable hope," concerning the poſſibility of forgetfulneſs. I will now refer this Council, and others, to the reſult of the inſtalling Council upon this article of charge:—

"VOTED UNANIMOUSLY,

That this *charge* is not ſupported in ſuch a manner, as that it lays the Rev. CLARK BROWN under the juſt imputation of falſehood."

PART 3d. *of the* 3d ART. *This reſpects what I ſaid at Capt.* WISTON'S *in Waltham, reſpecting the conduct of the* Rev. Mr. WARD, *of Brookfield.*

The Council as uſual, ratify and ſanction the accuſation. They unanimouſly vote, that I have not ſubſtantiated my reports "by any competent evidence, and which of conſequence, ought to be reputed as ſcandalous and falſe." Antecedent to this, they ſay, that I "had not ſufficient reaſon to credit ſuch reports." The Council will here ſuffer me to aſk them, how it was poſſible for them to know, that I had not ſufficient reaſons to credit them? I ſay I had, and ſtill think I had. I do not repute them either "falſe or ſcandalous."* I am now more

* Should thoſe miſtakes and errors, into which Doctor MORSE has fallen, according to numerous criminations againſt his veracity, be termed, by me "ſcandalous and

convinced, than ever, that they are true. After requesting all to whom this address shall come, to carefully peruse the following evidences, I request the Council, in a particular manner, to candidly peruse what is said upon this part of the 3d article, in the statement annexed to the work.

"We, the subscribers, conceive it our duty to certify to the public, that the Rev. CLARK BROWN has had sufficient reasons, to form the opinion, which he gave at Capt. WESTON's in Waltham, concerning the conduct of the Rev. Mr. WARD of Brookfield, on a certain Sunday when he and Mr. BROWN exchanged; for we do hereby solemnly declare, that Col. ALEXANDER SESSIONS informed us, that the said Mr. WARD invited him at the house of Mrs. WILLIAMS between meetings, where as he informed us, was a party convened for the purpose of laying some plan to oppose Mr. BROWN's settlement; in which as we conceived from the information which Col. SESSIONS gave us, Mr WARD took a part; they all having endeavoured, as he informed us, to make him side in an opposition against Mr BROWN, but could not accomplish their purpose. And we do hereby certify, that we have repeatedly given Mr. BROWN the above information, which undoubtedly led him to conclude and say, what the opposition in this town has alledged against him as false. And we cannot but express our astonishment, that the Council, in this result, should take no notice of our evidences, which we gave to them under an oath of solemnization, in Mr BROWN's favor; and that they should contrary to evidence, presume to criminate Mr. BROWN as having falsely aspersed Mr WARD's character. The above we are ready and willing at any time to testify under oath, should necessity call for it."

SAMUEL SESSIONS.
AARON MORGAN.

Brimfield, March 25th, 1801.

"In order to justify the innocence of an injured man, I hereby certify to the public, that I, the subscriber, did, before the late Ecclesiastical Council in this town, give in my evidence, under oath, that Col. ALEXANDER SESSIONS, did inform me, that the Rev. EPHRAIM WARD of Brookfield, did, on a certain Lord's Day, when he and the Rev. Mr. BROWN exchanged, invite him, between meetings, at the house of Mrs. WILLIAMS, where Mr. WARD put up; and there endeavoured, with others, to prejudice him against Mr. BROWN, and to induce him to commence an opposition against him. And I do therefore, certify my great astonishment that the Council should criminate the Rev. Mr. BROWN, in that article of charge against him, relating to what he said of Mr. WARD, at Capt. WESTON's, in Waltham."

(Signed) JOSEPH MORGAN.

false"; and should I thus term his oath, before the late Council, of which he was a member, in which he was evidently mistaken; I presume that he would not hesitate to say, that I was not actuated by that celestial virtue, which casts a viel over human infirmities, and puts the most favorable construction upon words, testimonies and actions. Urging the liability of inaccuracy as an excuse, charity apologize, "charity hopeth all things."

Mr ELIJAH HITCHCOCK and Wife, can testify more fully to the truth of what Mr. BROWN said about Mr. WARD, in his endeavouring to make an opposition to him, on a Lord's Day between meetings, when he and Mr. BROWN exchanged, according to the information which they received from Mr. SESSIONS relative to the subject. [*See Page* 16.]

PART 4th. of the 3d ART.—*This relates to "tarrying at Balls at unseasonable hours."*

Upon this accusation, the result of Council is, that it is not supported, so that I can "be generally convicted of unseasonably tarrying at Balls:" but yet, as if through a predelection for censure, they accuse me of encouraging "habits of dissipation," in others, "by an attendance upon those scenes of amusement." I must here be indulged the liberty of asking the Council, by what principles of propriety or justice, they presumed to censure me for that, with which I had not been previously criminated? It will be proper here to remark, that two of their evidences were out of town, and one of them in the State of Connecticut, at the time when they testified, through forgetfulness, that they were at a Ball with me. And that another evidence, a pretty young Lady, through forgetfulness, testified under oath, relative to the crimination, though she had previously given an evidence of a contrary nature. But for reasons, which need not be mentioned, the young Lady is excusable. [*See the reprinted evidence, page* 17.]

PART 5th. of the 3d ART.—*This relates to my resenting the insult of Lt.* Jonathan Brown, *publicly offered me, without the least provocation on my part.*

The result of Council acknowledges, that I "had provocation from the manner in which I was treated by Lt. BROWN" to resent his conduct: but yet, as if they could not refrain from making the worst of every charge, and magnifying its criminality to the highest degree possible, I am censured for not receiving his insults and abuses with passive forbearance. Upon this part of the result, I shall add no more, the following observation excepted; That one of the reverend gentlemen of the Council, said one morning in my hearing, "black coat or no black coat, if he had treated me in such a manner, I would have rung his nose for him."

PART 6th of the 3d ART.—*This relates to the accusation, in which I am charged of saying, "that asking blessings and returning thanks at meal times was out of fashion."*

This I never said. The second part of this sixth part, refers to my objecting to board in the family of Mr. NOAH HITCHCOCKS, on account "of being obliged to make long prayers, and ask a blessing, and return thanks, at every meal," had I have taken lodgings in his family.

The result of Council upon the whole of this sixth part, amounts to this, that it appeared to the Council, that I "had reference to tea tables," in my saying that asking blessings, and returning thanks, at meal times, was out of fashion. They think my "observations, recited in this charge are so far reprehensible, as they indicated a want of due deference for the received forms of piety." I shall make no further ob-

ſervation on this part of the reſult, only to aſk the Council, whether the *received forms of piety*, conſiſt in aſking bleſſings, and returning thanks, at tea-tables? If they do, moſt of you, gentlemen, are guilty, as well as myſelf, of diſregarding them.

PART 7th under the 3d ART. — *This reſpects my not having a proper regard to the Lord's Day. I will here recite the whole of the reſult of Council upon this accuſation.*

"VOTED UNANIMOUSLY—That there is not evidence that Mr. BROWN's apprehenſions of the nature of the Chriſtian Sabbath or manner of obſerving it, are inconſiſtent with a due ſanctification of it; yet his obſervations, as repreſented by the witneſſes, were ſuch in their kind and manner, as were calculated to raiſe in the minds of others, a ſuſpicion that he did not duly reverence it, and was prone to indulge levity with regard to this divine inſtitution."

It muſt appear to every candid and unprejudiced reader, that the Council found it difficult to ſanction this accuſation; but as it muſt be done, in ſome way or another, they reſult that my "obſervations were calculated to raiſe a ſuſpicion," that I did not reverence the conſecration of the day, as a "divine inſtitution." The principle evidence was, that I aſked a man, in what manner he ſuppoſed, the inhabitants towards the North Pole of the world, where days increaſed by months, as they do beyond the 66th degree of North Latitude, could obſerve or keep the Lord's Day.

Though I do not recollect that I gave him any opinion, yet I believe that the ſeventh part of time can be kept ſacred there, as well as in the ſouthern climates, which would anſwer the purpoſe and deſign of the chriſtian ſabbath.

ART. 4th—*This relates to the irregularity of the renewal of my call from the Church.*

UPON this Article, the Council have *unanimouſly voted*, "That the proceedings relating to the renewal of my call and Inſtallment," "ought to be conſidered eccleſiaſtically null and void"

After informing the members of the Council, and all others whom it may concern, that I ſhall never pay any kind of attention to this part of their reſult; and that I ſhall conſider myſelf the Miniſter of a regular Church, until the Church ſhall regularly diſmiſs me; and that I ſhall of conſequence continue to adminiſter ordinances to them as uſual; I ſhall once more aſſume the liberty, to requeſt the Council to carefully and candidly peruſe the following vote of the inſtalling Council upon this Article; and after which, to have recourſe to the ſtatement annexed, upon this part of the reſult of the Council.

Vote of the Inſtalling Council.—From the Meeting-Houſe, "having returned to Mr. ASPENVAL's, the Council deliberated upon the objection offered on the part of the oppoſition, and finding it invalid, THEY UNANIMOUSLY VOTED:

"That the proceedings of the Town, and of the Church in *Brimfield*, have been *regular*, reſpecting the renewal of the Reverend CLARK BROWN's call to become their Goſpel Miniſter."

Having thus made my remarks upon the proceedings and result of the Council, upon the accusations which they were "obliged to ratify," I now seriously ask the members of the Council, how they could say with propriety, that I have neglected the exhortation given by my fathers and brethren at the time of my installation?" The exhortation to which they allude, is, "We take occasion to remind Mr. BROWN of the purity, which is so essential to the christian, and of the dignity so ornamental to the ministerial character." Considering that the accusations, upon which the result of the Council now under examination, were all, excepting part 1st. 3d and 5th of Article 3d, exhibited to the Installing Council, from the guilt of which I was then exonerated, I think I have sufficient reason to say, that I cannot be justly chargeable of having disregarded the exhortation of my Fathers and Brethren of the Installing Council.

To the members of the last Council, I now beg permission to address myself in a few words, plain and yet serious.

GENTLEMEN,

Looking over your address to me, you cannot but be convinced, that some parts of it would have been much more applicable, if it had been addressed to a criminal confined for some capital crime, than it was to one over whom you had no power, who was under no obligation to hear it, and who had once before been honorably acquitted, by a learned and respectable Council, from the guilt of those very charges, upon which you predicated your address. In your result and address, you have virtually approved and sanctioned all the blackguarding and defamatory assertions of the Clergyman, who was the advocate for the opposition; and one, who delights, if common fame be true, to excite disturbances among Ministers and their people, and to appear in the character of a clerical attorney. Such a character, in my opinion, is a disgrace to the profession, and dishonary to the christian cause. Have such characters imbibed the true spirit of christianity, and felt the genuine influence of its principles upon their hearts and minds?

You have also virtually sanctioned the conduct of Deacon Brown, and created him perpetual moderator, or rather dictator of the Church in this town: A man, who, notwithstanding his pretensions to religion and calvinistic orthodoxy, is the man who has long been known to have been destitute of the tranquil spirit of the pacific religion of Christ: A man who contended with the Monson minister; who preferred the noise of a saw-mill to the preaching of the Woodstock minister; who wished that the Western minister *had sense enough to know that he was a fool*, though he now pretends to have an high esteem for him, and for the Woodstock minister, as well others, whose abilities and sentiments he has before attempted to bring into disrepute: a man who said that he did not wish to pay his money to any minister, unless for working upon his farm; who, in the course of the ministry of the late Rev. Mr. WILLIAMS, was at variance with him and his Church, and who in consequence of which absented himself from Church communion; who, when Mr. WILLIAMS expressed to him his disapprobation for his being so ready to attend upon the preaching of illiterate and itinerant universalists, said that *he would hear the Devil preach for all him*, or words to

a ſimilar purpoſe, and the man who ſolemnly ſwore to my memory, that I had not forgotton what I ſaid I had. This is the man, before whom, the church in this town is to bow; whoſe moderatorſhip ſhe muſt acknowledge. Whoſoever will, let him do it.—Read and underſtand.

I wiſh to know, Gentlemen, in what conſiſts "the DELETERIOUS EFFECTS of my deviations from moral rule." I aſſure you, Gentlemen, I am not conſcious of them: I have often witneſſed ſeveral ſuch deviations, if they deſerve the name, in thoſe who are highly eſteemed for their piety. What more could you have ſaid to a criminal, convicted of robbery and murder, and condemned to ſuffer for the ſame, than the following, "We entreat you to reſort to the boſom of the divine mercy, and forever turn with deteſtation from thoſe indulgencies which are offenſive to God, and which menace, with awful alarms, the perdition of the ſoul?" In what light, I am to conſider ſuch an exhortation, I cannot determine. I aſſure you, Gentlemen, had I have entertained the ſuſpicion, that ſuch would have been your language to me in the preſence of my Church and people, before whom I had continued to preach with approbation, and whoſe reſpect and affection I ſtill retained, you would never had the opportunity of thus addreſſing me.

But I conclude; after expreſſing my obligations and gratitude to you, for your ſympathetic feelings, and good wiſhes for my preſent and future happineſs. From yours, in the faith and fellowſhip of the Goſpel of peace and good will,

CLARK BROWN.

Brimfield, May 22d, 1801.

STATEMENT, IN A LETTER.

REVEREND SIR,

YOUR reſult of March 17th, 1801, has been ſhewn us, by the Rev. CLARK BROWN. By the reſult, it appears you have made the town, a party with Mr. BROWN without their conſent. You ſay, "that after carefully examining and weighing the evidence offered, it appeared, that ABNER MORGAN, Eſq. agent of the town, did conſent, to ſubmit their differences to a mutual Council, before the Courts Committee, and that the Selectmen and Committee of the town did conſent to this mode of ſettlement." Your witneſs was Deacon BROWN, who ſolemnly teſtified, that ſaid agent did conſent before the Courts Committee, to have a mutual Council:—But ſaid agent, with as much ſolemnity, did teſtify, that he did not make any ſuch agreement, not having any authority to thus agree; and the Courts Committee themſelves ſay, there was no ſuch argument made before them. The Selectmen and Committee of the town alſo ſaid, they made no ſuch agreement, and that they were not authorized to make any ſuch agreement. Your principal authority was the teſtimony of Deacon BROWN.*—If by the weight of Deacon BROWN's teſtimony, your Council could be induced to reſult, that the town were a party with Mr BROWN, in his controverſy with the oppoſition, when every individual in the town declared they were not, and

* Doctor MORSE's evidence was corroborative; but incompatible with the Letter from the Court's Committee. [*See the purport of the letter, and the ſentiment and voice of* HUNDREDS, *at the end of the book*] C. B.

would not be a party in the controverſy, we can eaſily account for Mr. BROWN's being convicted on every article of charge againſt him.

Deacon BROWN was witneſs to all the charges. Although you in your reſult do not convict Mr. BROWN of hereſy, yet you ſay, "the aggrieved had reaſon to be diſſatisfied with his immoderate zeal, in propagating his ſentiments." It appears to us, if your Council had attended to the cauſes, you would not have cenſured him on that point.—The firſt Council in a very illiberal way, dragged his ſentiments from him, and then cenſured him on that point; and from that circumſtance fame ſpread through the adjacent country, that Mr BROWN denied the divinity of our Saviour, and conſidered him as any mere man. By this report Mr. BROWN's reputation was injured, as well as the reputation of the town, who attended upon his miniſtry; and of courſe it became expedient for him to clear up his reputation, and by the advice of his friends he publiſhed his ſentiments in two diſcourſes; ſo that the illiberal, and (as we think) the unchriſtian treatment of the firſt Council forced him into that meaſure, which we think is a full juſtification—

You in your reſult ſay, "that Mr. BROWN uttered reports at Waltham reſpecting Mr. WARD, which he had not ſufficient reaſon to credit, and which of conſequence ought to be reputed falſe and ſcandalous." Give us leave to aſk, how your Council could know, that Mr. BROWN had not reaſon to credit the reports? They came from Col. SESSION (who was the propoſed ſubject of converſion) to three credible witneſſes at different times, whoſe word would be believed where they are known, as ſoon as Mr. WARD's. It was in this town believed to be true.—In order to fix that charge on Mr. BROWN, you muſt have known that he believed Col. SESSION's did *not* ſpeak the truth to thoſe three witneſſes; or that he never made any ſuch communications to them, and that they ſpread thoſe reports of themſelves. But they are all of them credible witneſſes. And why ſhould Mr. BROWN believe them to be falſe, when every other perſon in this town believed them to be true? We think that in addition to the credibility of witneſſes, Mr. BROWN had further reaſon to accredit the reports; to wit, Mr. WARD's not mentioning him in his prayers on that Sunday, which is unprecedented among miniſters; and his ſelecting out Col. SESSION's on that Sunday noon, who was the ſubject for converſion, and conveying him to the place of rendezvous, where the game was to be played upon him, by thoſe conſcientious and ſcrupulous obſervers of the *Lord's Day*, whoſe conſciences were wounded at Mr BROWN's carrying a letter to Capt. EATON's on Sunday.

Your Council have alſo (unexpectedly to us) intermeddled with the reſult of the inſtalling Council, after they had given us the fulleſt aſſurances they ſhould not. Do your Council aſſume a ſuperiority over that Council? Have you an appellant juriſdiction over them? And have you power and authority, to ſupercede or diſſolve the tranſactions of that Council? If you have not, it appears to us, that, that part of your reſult will have no good effect; and until you ſatisfy the inhabitants of this town, that you have that power, it is probable they will pay no regard to that part of your reſult. Some of the members of

your Council saying, while you were all present, that they should not attempt to rip up the doings of any former Council, was the reason that no care was taken to give them information on that subject, except the result of the installing Council, which was supposed, under those circumstances, sufficient for that purpose.

It appears to us, that your Council are still ignorant of the meaning of the votes of this Church, passed in the life time of Mr WILLIAMS, and the practice consequent thereon. It appears by your result, that you ground your opinions on the vote of July 6th, 1775, and on Deacon BROWN's private Church meeting April 21, 1798, on a Saturday, when the members did not generally attend. If you had attended to the votes in the Church book, you would have seen, that the vote of July 6, 1775, was passed by the advice of Mr PAINE and Mr IVES for the sole purpose of dealing with a Mrs. HITCHCOCK, a member then in full communion, and who had absented herself some years from Church communion; and that it was not intended to apply to those members who were not then in full communion: And in fact it cannot apply to them generally; for the substance of the vote is, "those who willingly and willfully absent or withdraw themselves from the stated worship or ordinances for the space of twelve months, shall be barred from all Church privileges." Those members in question were constant attendants on the stated worship, and their walk was orderly; and they could not withdraw themselves from the ordinances, until they had come up to them: It is impossible for a person to withdraw himself from a place he never was in.

But if the vote had been passed with an intent to have it apply to members of both descriptions so far as it could apply; yet the vote of June 1st, 1789 fourteen years afterwards, wholly superceded, or virtually repealed it; for the vote of June 1st, 1789 declares them to be members of the Church absolutely, and without any condition, and of consequence intitled to all the privileges in the Church, whenever they should let such their desire be known to the Church. And those members did let their desire be known to the Church, before Deacon *Brown's* Saturday private Church meeting, in which he procured himself to be chosen standing moderator, and a vote, "to prevent any more members being added to the Church, until the Church should agree upon some mode of proceedure." No mode of proceedure would ever have taken place if Deacon *Brown* could have had his will; and the town must have continued in its then confused and distracted situation. This vote for preventing any more members being added to the Church, and as mentioned by your Council in your result, we conceive to be a disgrace to the christian profession.

Is not the declaration of the gospel of *Jesus Christ*, COME, ALL THINGS ARE READY? And is not the invitation to all? If the Gospel says, ALL THINGS ARE READY, and invite all to come, and that the door is open, has Deacon BROWN and his part of the Church,* a Gospel right to say, that those who wish to come, shall not?

* Is it just and right, and can it be consistent with the civil and religious liberties of the people of this country, that fourteen persons, (among whom are two methodists, and several superannuated persons, though serious and conscientious, who constitute Deacon BROWN's part of the votes of the church) should dictate to upwards of ONE THOUSAND people, in the settlement or continuance of a minister. C. B

We believe this to be the first instance when persons were refused admittance into a Church, where there were no objections to their moral character, except in the time of our Saviour, when the Scribes, Pharisees and Hypocrites would not go in themselves nor suffer those who were entering, to go in.

The Church here previous to Deacon BROWN's Saturday Meeting were equal in number, for and against Mr. BROWN, but one in favour of Mr BROWN being an invalid at that time did not attend; so the vote was turned against Mr. BROWN by Deacon BROWN whilst he was moderator. After the three members belonging to this town had signified their intention to come up to the ordinances; the vote was in favour of the minister, without the assistance of the member from South Brimfield or Woodstock. The Statement therefore in your result on that point, that there was a tie, is not true.

You in your result say, "that the vote of March 7, 1775 was not designed to constitute the persons therein named voters in the Church, prior to their compliance with the sealing ordinances of the Lord's Supper." We say if the vote of March, '75 did not constitute them voters, that the vote of June 1, 1789, fourteen years afterwards did make them voters, for it declared them to be members of the Church absolutely and without any condition, and intitled them all to the privileges in the Church, whenever they should let such, their desire be known to the Church; and can it be said with propriety, that a member of the Church is intitled to all the privileges in the Church, and at the same time, that he is not a voter?

After the Church had passed the vote of June 1, 1789, they chose committees, and directed them to call on those members mentioned in said vote, and inform them of said vote; some time afterwards three of them came up to the table of the Lord agreeable to said vote, upon signifying their desire. The other members made their excuses to the Church, and at the Church meeting in November 1789, the Church voted to accept their excuses, and wait on them: Whereupon Mr. WILLIAMS waited on them seven years, and then died; and about one year and a half afterwards, they signified their desire to come up to the ordinances, and did come up to them according to said vote, and the practice of said Church in the life time of Mr WILLIAMS. And will your Council say, that after those members had let their desire to come up to the table of the Lord, be known to the Church, by means whereof they were intitled to all the privileges in the Church; that Deacon BROWN's private Church meeting, could prevent them? Could Deacon BROWN's private Church meeting by a vote, divest those members of a right, that had already been vested in them, by the established rules and regulations of the same Church? Surely it could not.

We do not mean unjustly to criminate your Council: we believe you endeavoured to act conscientiously; but have been misled in your inquiries*; particularly in your making the town a party with Mr BROWN, contrary to their uniform declarations and votes in town meetings and elsewhere, ever since the installation of Mr BROWN. And likewise in

* Prejudice often obscures the mental sight. C. B.

your attempting to overset the doings of the installing Council, especially after you had given us reason to believe you should not. Your result on those two points has given great dissatisfaction to the inhabitants of this town; your making them a party without their consent, touches their liberty, which is a very tender point with them. Mr. Brown agreeable to your result has asked a dismission; but the inhabitants of this town at a legal town meeting, have refused to grant his request; so that he must either continue preaching here for the present, or break his contract with the town, and then be liable to an action for damages.

We do not pretend to justify Mr Brown in all things, he is subject to human infirmities like other men; when we first called him to preach with us, we did not expect he was a perfect man; we are willing to make that allowance for human frailties which charity requires. But we believe him to be an honest man, and greatly abused by the opposition and neighbouring ministers; and it is his integrity as well as ability, which attaches him to us.

He is sensible himself that in some things he has erred; he is willing to make christian satisfaction to all, whom, in any instance, he may have injured.

And is Mr. Brown the only person in this christian land, to whom no pardon can be allowed?

Is he the only person, whose offences are of so deep a die, that they cannot be washed away?

Is he the only person, who must be driven by his enemies, from a pleasant situation, into a state of perishing want and distress?

We are &c.

Signed by a number of the Inhabitants of the town of Brimfield.

Brimfield, April 27, 1801.

To the Rev. JOHN T. KIRKLAND.

Mr Elijah Hitchcock's *Evidence, against the 3d Part of the 3d Article, communicated after the copies of the eight first pages were struck off.*

"I the Subscriber, do hereby certify and declare, That Col. Alexander Sessions told me, that he, with a number of others, were invited at the house of Mrs. Williams, on Sunday between meetings, when the Rev. Mr. *Ward* exchanged with the Rev. Mr. *Brown*; that Mr. *Ward* was present; that Lieutenant *Jonathan Brown* passed by his own house, in order to resort to the place of rendezvous; that the subject of conversation was about Mr. *Brown's* settlement in this town; that their conduct was strange, and such as he never saw before; that he was determined not to go there any more, on Sunday, even if invited; and that he told them in objection to the plan which they were forming in order to oppose Mr. *Brown's* settlement, that the town would be ruined if he should not settle among us, there being such an unanimous desire among the people for his settlement, in the ministry in this town. And I do further solemnly testify and declare, that I have always concieved according to Col. *Sessions* con-

verſation with me, as ſtated above, that Mr. *Ward* took an active part, to the great diſapprobation of Col. *Seſſions*, in endeavouring to prejudice the minds of people againſt Mr *Brown*. To this evidence, I am ready and willing to make oath, ſhould it be neceſſary.*

Atteſt, ELIJAH HITCHCOCK.

The moſt of the above communications, were made in the preſence and hearing of Mrs. *Hitchcock*.

* The perſons invited, as mentioned above, are the conſcientious obſervers of the Lord's Day, according to their pious accuſations and aſſertions. Have not their iniquities, and hypocritical devices, found them out? C. B.

Re-printed Evidence, relating to the 4th part of the 3d Article.

Brimfield, March, 1798.

This may certify, that we the ſubſcribers were at a Ball on Thankſgiving-Day evening. The Rev. *Clark Brown* was preſent. And we do affirm, that Mr. *Brown* expreſſed his wiſh to retire at an early period—that he waited for ſome company he had engaged to wait on home to his lodgings—that he went as ſoon as they were ready—that he was not guilty of any vanity, levity, or indiſcretion, which exceeds the bounds of that decorum, which is juſtly expected from a preacher of the Goſpel; and that in our eſtimation he has not leſſened the dignity of that office, which we have been taught to conſider, as being the duty of every miniſter of Jeſus to ſupport.

Signed, *Betſey Fairbanks*, *William Blodget*,
Pamela Burt, *Ezra Winſlow*,
Patty Smith, *Cheſter Moffett*,
Thadeous Fairbank.

MR. BROWN's REQUEST FOR A DISMISSION.

I REQUEST the attention of my Church and People now preſent, while, agreeable to the reſult of Council on the 18th inſt. I petition for a diſſolution of that *ſolemn contract*, into which we have mutually entered.

The people of this town, cannot be inſenſible, that it was by their ſolicitations, that I came and preached with them upon probation: and that it was by their unanimous requeſt, that I conſented to ſettle with them in the Goſpel Miniſtry.

The morning on which the firſt Council met, conſiſting of the neighbouring Miniſters, I was preſented with a number of articles of charges, drawn up with a view for barriers againſt my inſtallment, and ſigned by ſix perſons only.

Not having time to procure evidences, to invalidate the charges which reſpected my conduct, and not thinking them of ſufficient importance to anſwer the purpoſes for which they were intended, I was left defenceleſs. Contrary to my expectations, thoſe which reſpected ſentiments operated in the minds of the Council againſt my inſtalment. Having evidences afterwards, that the majority of the Council came with a determination not to proceed to the inſtalment, and conſidering myſelf treated in a very unchriſtian manner, I have ever ſince freely ſpoken my mind. The town ſtill expreſſing their attachment to me, as manifeſted in the renewal of their call, I conſented to have another

trial for an inſtalment, in which I ſucceeded. After which, I fancied that the neighbouring clergy would ceaſe to meddle with our affairs, and would adviſe the oppoſition to contend no longer. Diſappointed in this, and perſuaded, according to credible reports, that the neighbouring miniſters had put in circulation many of the accuſations of my enemies, which were never true; I have, therefore, declared my opinion of their conduct and proceedings; in doing which, I have more and more incured their diſpleaſure and increaſed their oppoſition.

But notwithſtanding all my provocations and temptations, I can ſay from my heart, I wiſh to be at peace with my enemies; and that I am ready, at any time when they wiſh for a conciliation, to make them all that ſatisfaction, which reaſon and chriſtianity may dictate. In order to make peace, if poſſible, I conſented to join with the aggrieved in this town, in calling the late Council, whoſe reſult was read on Wedneſday laſt.

Not expecting that the Council, would go into an examination of thoſe accuſations, which were preſented to the Inſtalling Council, and of the guilt of which I was then acquitted; not conſidering, that this Council would implicate the inſtalling Council in their reſult; not ſuſpicious that this or any other body of men, would have called, true criminations, *ſlander* and *defamation*; not doubting, but what they would have permitted me to have ſubſtantiated my charges againſt individuals of my enemies, whether of laity or clergy; if they ſhould judge what I had ſaid of them was cenſurable; and not expecting, that the oppoſition would have five clergymen with their delegates to my two; I ſay, not anticipating theſe things, I was unprepared for a defenſe; I am therefore conſtrained to ſay, that I have not had an impartial and equitable trial.

Unwilling to act in oppoſition to the neighbouring clergy and the ex-parte Councils called by the oppoſition; and unwilling alſo to reſult againſt the oppoſition, who have endeavoured to ſupport Eccleſiaſtical power and authority, the late Council have reſulted againſt my continuance here in the miniſtry, contrary to the poſitive declarations and remonſtrances of a large majority in the town. The reſult of this Council, the people will remember, is in oppoſition to that of the inſtalling Council. It calls in queſtion the regularity of their proceedings, in the votes which they paſſed, reſpecting ſeveral articles of charges, which both Councils have had under examination. Though I do not conſider myſelf holden, to comply with the reſult of the Council, in conſequence of the agreement, into which I and the committee of the oppoſition entered before evidences, reſpecting the excluſion of ſome members of the Council on the party, who ſhould, at the organization of the Council have the greateſt number, ſo that the number on both parties might be equal; which was not done according to agreement, it being refuſed on the part of the oppoſition, they having had five to my two; yet notwithſtanding this, I ſhall comply with the reſult as far as I can, conſiſtent with the ſolemn contract which I have made with my Church and people.

How far the reſult of this Council, will tend for the re-union of this town and church, and for the real proſperity of the Redeemer's king-

dom in this part of the world, I venture not to say at present:—time alone can determine. How far this and other Councils, which have sat in this town, upon the difficulties existing in the minds of the opposition, have judged rightly and justly concerning my character, and the rise and progress of said difficulties, will never be fully known in this world. But as the Omniscient God, who cannot possibly be deceived, "will bring every work, with every secret thing into judgement," the truth then will be brought to light, and the cloud of deception will be forever removed.

Having a conscience void of any intentional offence, and having sincere desires to promote the cause of truth and virtue, which is the cause of Jesus Christ, I am consoled, under my present trials, when I look forward to a day of righteous retribution, when I shall be judged according to absolute equity and impartiality, the truth being known without any aid or coloring, either by ministers or lawyers.—But reverting from this anticipated *scene*, so solemn and interesting, I must observe, that I not only feel anxiously solicitous for myself, but for this church and people.—Can I forsake them without their consent?

If my relation were dissolved as the minister of this town, still there are two churches. But such considerations I at present leave, and hasten to ask, according to the result of Council, to have things arranged in such a manner, by my church and people, that they may dismiss me from being their minister, in a manner consistent with the demands of equity and religion. You will here remark and remember, that I expect my dismission, when granted, will be attended with suitable written testimones of your wishes and sentiments concerning me; and also with an equitable and reasonable compensation for making me good in damages, that I might not be cast out into the world without having the means for a reputable subsistence in my power, until Divine Providence shall again place me in a situation, in which I may gain the common and necessary blessings of life, both for myself and family.

My friends in this town, will here accept of my unfeigned gratitude, for the many respectful kindnesses, which from them I have received; and my enemies may be assured, that I am desirous to be at peace with them, if they wish it; and am ready to forgive as I hope to be forgiven. And finally, I earnestly ask the prayers of all God's people in this place, that I might be supported under my heavy afflictions, and that he would graciously be pleased, at this trying time, to make the path of duty plain before me.

CLARK BROWN.

Brimfield, March 22, 1801.

The following is the true PURPORT *of the* Hon. Mr. Treadwell's *Letter, to* Abner Morgan, esq. *relative to the Agreement, into which he,* Abner Morgan, esq. *entered with the Agents of the opposition in the town of Brimfield, before the General Court's Committee for the incorporation of parishes: viz.*—

'That Esquire *Morgan* did neither agree, nor promise, in the capacity of an agent for the town of Brimfield, that said town should have a mutual Council with their minister; and that he made no other agreement excepting, that which he himself acknowledges he did make.'

But the evidence of one of the agents of the oppoſition, and its confirmation by a member of the Council, under oath, before ſaid Council was of a contrary nature and tendency; by which, as well as by the reſult of the late Council, the truth of Eſquire *Morgan's* communications and evidence, relative to the ſubject, have been virtually queſtioned, and manifeſtly repreſented in a diſgraceful light. In the full confirmation of the whole of which, numerous credible evidences, are ready to give their SOLEMN ATTESTATION.

But notwithſtanding which, and the conduct of the oppoſition, and all their unjuſt and evil miſrepreſentations; with the conduct of the clergy in their vicinity, in unlawfully meddling with the proceedings of the town and church; muſt, according to the reſult of the late Council, be approbated and juſtified, as correſponding with "the ſpirit of the Goſpel, and the benign influence of genuine religion."—The people of Brimfield, however, in general, have at preſent quite different views of the repreſentations and requirements of the chriſtian religion. If they had not, how could they reverence and obey it as having a divine and celeſtial origin?

Judging from the reſults of ex-parte Councils, and that of the late Council, as well as from the uncharitable and inimical words and actions of many calviniſtic and hopkinſian clergymen, nothing can be ſatisfactory to them, or can ingratiate Mr. *Brown's* friends into their favor, unleſs they will put the ſame comment upon the criminations of the oppoſition, which Mr *Brown's* inimical accuſers and judges require, even while they know them to be void of equity and truth. If Mr. *Brown's* friends, would turn his enemies, and would caſt him out into the world, without reputation, and a reaſonable compenſation for making him *good in damages*, this would undoubtedly be pleaſing to the oppoſition, and their clerical advocates; who would, at the ſame time, wiſh to be conſidered the friends of juſtice, humanity and religion. But as Mr. *Brown* came into Brimfield, with good credentials, and with a reſpectable character; and as he has done nothing to merit thoſe cenſures and reproaches, caſt upon him by the oppoſition, and which have been ſanctioned and ratified by thoſe, who, in juſtice, ought to have reputed them "ſcandalous and falſe"; and as he gave up to the town one hundred pounds, voted him towards a ſettlement, which he could have retained for his own private uſe, even if he were diſmiſſed, and of the whole of which he would be deprived, without any conſideration or compenſation, were he diſmiſſed according to the reſult of Council; the town of Brimfield, under theſe conſiderations and circumſtances, cannot at preſent, be perſuaded to be guilty of ſuch acts of injuſtice and cruelty; and which, in fact, in the view of the impartial and unprejudiced, would caſt an indeliable ſtigma upon their reputation.

THE SENTIMENTS AND VOICE OF HUNDREDS.

Brimfield, June 8th, 1801.

ERRATA.—In page 5, line 4, for *diſpoſitions*, read "diſpoſition;" in page 6, line 14, read *were* for "am;" page 7, line 3, read *order* for "ardor"; page 8, laſt line but one in the note, read *apologizes* for "apologize."

(Dec., 1888, 20,000)

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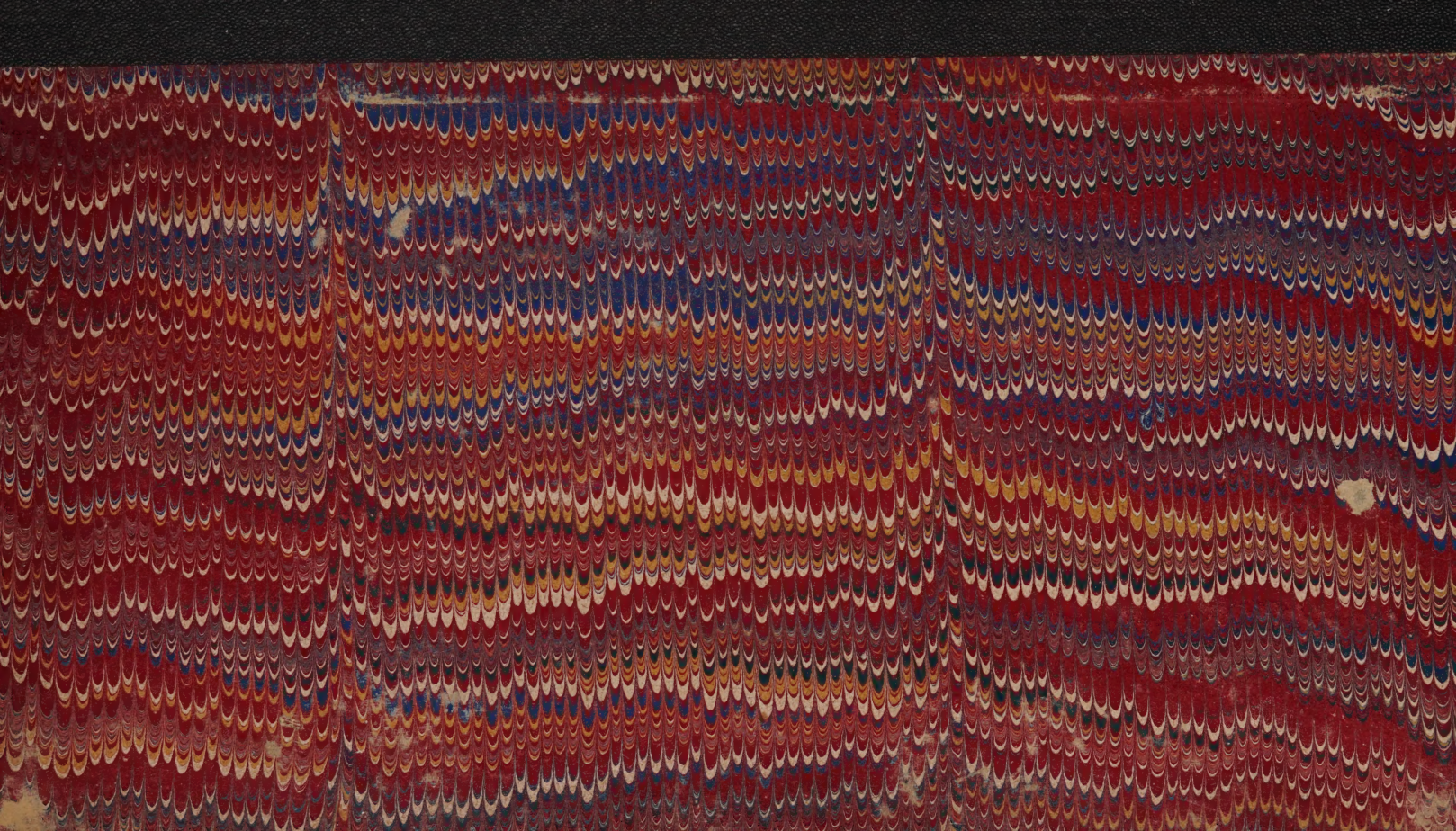
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